



# Greater Atlantic Region Bulletin

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## **Skate Bait Letter of Authorization Holders**

### **Southern Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measure Implementation**

The Southern Windowpane Flounder Accountability Measure (AM) Areas were enacted because the southern windowpane flounder fishing year 2015 quota was exceeded. Effective August 1, 2017, trawl vessels fishing with a codend mesh size of 5 inches or greater, including those fishing under a Letter of Authorization (LOA) for skate bait, must use an approved selective trawl gear when fishing in the AM Areas. The AM Areas encompass a large portion of Federal waters within the Skate Bait Trawl Exemption Area (see image below). Vessels can fish in the Skate Bait Trawl Exemption Area under the LOA outside of the AM Areas.

Because catch of southern windowpane flounder did not exceed the overall quota in 2016, the gear-restricted areas will only be required for 1 month for vessels fishing on a groundfish day-at-sea. Starting September 1, 2017, vessels may fish in the AM Areas without using approved selective trawl gear when fishing on a declared groundfish trip. We are considering a future action to remove the AM Areas for vessels not targeting groundfish before the end of this fishing year.

More information on windowpane flounder AMs can be found here:  
<http://www.nero.noaa.gov/regs/infodocs/windowpaneaminfosheet.pdf>.

### **Southern Windowpane Accountability Measure and Skate Fishery Areas**

